Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend Claims 5-18. Please add new Claims 22-28. The Claim Listing below will replace all prior versions of the claims in the application:

Claim Listing:

Claim 1 (original): A method of stimulating cartilage growth or repair at a site in a subject in need of such growth or repair, said method comprising the step of administering to the site a therapeutically effective amount of an agonist of the non-proteolytically activated thrombin receptor.

Claim 2 (original): The method of Claim 1 wherein the site is an arthritic joint.

Claim 3 (original): The method of Claim 1 wherein the site is being treated for cartilage damage or loss.

Claim 4 (original): The method of Claim 1 wherein the site is being treated for cartilage damage or loss due to traumatic injury.

Claim 5 (currently amended): The method of Claim 1 wherein the agonist is a thrombin peptide derivative, or a physiologically functional equivalent thereof, comprising a polypeptide represented by the following structural formula:

Asp-Ala-R;

wherein R is a serine esterase conserved sequence.

Claim 6 (currently amended): The method of Claim 5 wherein the agonist consists of ~~thrombin peptide derivative has~~ between about 12 and about 23 amino acids.

Claim 7 (currently amended): The method of Claim 6 wherein the serine esterase conserved sequence consists of ~~has~~ the amino acid sequence of ~~SEQ ID NO. 1~~

SEQ ID NO.:1 (Cys-Glu-Gly-Asp-Ser-Gly-Gly-Pro-Phe-Val), or a *C*-terminal truncated fragment thereof consisting of ~~having~~ at least six amino acids, provided that zero, one, two or three amino acids in the serine esterase conserved sequence differ from the corresponding position of ~~SEQ ID NO 1~~ SEQ ID NO.:1.

Claim 8 (currently amended): The method of Claim 6 wherein the serine esterase conserved sequence consists of ~~has~~ the amino acid sequence of ~~SEQ ID NO. 1~~ SEQ ID NO.:1 (Cys-Glu-Gly-Asp-Ser-Gly-Gly-Pro-Phe-Val), or a *C*-terminal truncated fragment thereof consisting of ~~having~~ at least nine amino acids, provided that zero, one or two of the amino acids in the serine esterase conserved region are conservative substitutions of the corresponding amino acid in ~~SEQ ID NO 1~~ SEQ ID NO.:1.

Claim 9 (currently amended): The method of Claim 6 wherein the serine esterase conserved sequence consists of ~~has~~ the amino acid sequence of ~~SEQ ID NO 2~~ SEQ ID NO.:2 (Cys-X_1-Gly-Asp-Ser-Gly-Gly-Pro-X_2-Val, wherein X_1 is Glu or Gln and X_2 is Phe, Met, Leu, His or Val), or a *C*-terminus truncated fragment of ~~SEQ ID NO 2~~ SEQ ID NO.:2, said fragment consisting of ~~having~~ at least six amino acids.

Claim 10 (currently amended): The method of Claim 9 wherein the agonist ~~thrombin peptide derivative~~ comprises the amino acid sequence Arg-Gly-Asp-Ala ~~(SEQ ID NO 3)~~ (SEQ ID NO.:3).

Claim 11 (currently amended): The method of Claim 10 wherein the agonist ~~thrombin peptide derivative~~ comprises the amino acid sequence Arg-Gly-Asp-Ala-Cys-X_1-Gly-Asp-Ser-Gly-Gly-Pro-X_2-Val ~~(SEQ ID NO 4)~~ (SEQ ID NO.:4), wherein X_1 is Glu or Gln and X_2 is Phe, Met, Leu, His or Val.

Claim 12 (currently amended): The method of Claim 11 wherein the agonist consists of ~~thrombin peptide derivative has~~ the amino acid sequence Ala-Gly-Try-Lys-Pro-Asp-Glu-Gly-Lys-Arg-Gly-Asp-Ala-Cys-Glu-Gly-Asp-Ser-Gly-Gly-Pro-Phe-Val-~~(SEQ ID NO 5)~~ (SEQ ID NO.:5), or an *N*-terminal truncated fragment thereof, provided that zero, one, two or three amino acids at positions 1-9 in the agonist ~~thrombin peptide derivative~~ differ from the amino acid at the corresponding position of ~~SEQ ID NO 5~~ SEQ ID NO.:5.

Claim 13 (currently amended): The method of Claim 11 wherein the agonist consists of ~~thrombin peptide derivative has~~ the amino acid sequence Ala-Gly-Try-Lys-Pro-Asp-Glu-Gly-Lys-Arg-Gly-Asp-Ala-Cys-Glu-Gly-Asp-Ser-Gly-Gly-Pro-Phe-Val-~~(SEQ ID NO 5)~~ (SEQ ID NO.:5), or an *N*-terminal truncated fragment thereof, provided that zero, one or two amino acids at positions 1-9 in the agoinst ~~thrombin peptide derivative~~ are conservative substitutions of the amino acid at the corresponding position of ~~SEQ ID NO 5~~ SEQ ID NO.:5.

Claim 14 (currently amended): The method of Claim 12 wherein the agoinst ~~thrombin peptide derivative~~ is administered in a pharmaceutical composition additionally comprising an implantable, biocompatible carrier.

Claim 15 (currently amended): The method of Claim 14 wherein the carrier comprises a ~~polylactic acid/polyglycolic acid homopolymer~~ polylactic acid homopolymer, polyglycolic homopolymer or copolymer .

Claim 16 (currently amended): A method of stimulating cartilage growth or repair at a site in a subject ~~in need there such growth or repair~~ in need of such growth or repair, said method comprising the step of administering to the site a therapeutically effective amount of an agonist of the non-proteolytically activated thrombin receptor, wherein said agonist consists of ~~a peptide having~~ the sequence Ala-Gly-

Try-Lys-Pro-Asp-Glu-Gly-Lys-Arg-Gly-Asp-Ala-Cys-Glu-Gly-Asp-Ser-Gly-Gly-Pro-Phe-Val ~~(SEQ ID NO 5)~~ (SEQ ID NO.:5).

Claim 17 (currently amended): A method of stimulating cartilage growth at an arthritic joint in a subject, said method comprising the step of administering to the site a therapeutically effective amount of an agonist of the non-proteolytically activated thrombin receptor, wherein said agonist consists of ~~a peptide having~~ the sequence Ala-Gly-Try-Lys-Pro-Asp-Glu-Gly-Lys-Arg-Gly-Asp-Ala-Cys-Glu-Gly-Asp-Ser-Gly-Gly-Pro-Phe-Val ~~(SEQ ID NO 5)~~ (SEQ ID NO.:5).

Claim 18 (currently amended): A method of stimulating cartilage growth in a subject at a site being treated for cartilage loss, said method comprising the step of administering to the site a therapeutically effective amount of an agonist of the non-proteolytically activated thrombin receptor, wherein said agonist consists of ~~a peptide having~~ the sequence Ala-Gly-Try-Lys-Pro-Asp-Glu-Gly-Lys-Arg-Gly-Asp-Ala-Cys-Glu-Gly-Asp-Ser-Gly-Gly-Pro-Phe-Val ~~(SEQ ID NO 5)~~ (SEQ ID NO.:5).

Claim 19 (currently amended): A method of stimulating cartilage growth in a subject at a site being treated for cartilage loss due to traumatic injury, said method comprising the step of administering to the site a therapeutically effective amount of an agonist of the non-proteolytically activated thrombin receptor, wherein said agonist consists of ~~a peptide having~~ the sequence Ala-Gly-Try-Lys-Pro-Asp-Glu-Gly-Lys-Arg-Gly-Asp-Ala-Cys-Glu-Gly-Asp-Ser-Gly-Gly-Pro-Phe-Val ~~(SEQ ID NO 5)~~ (SEQ ID NO.:5).

Claim 20 (original): A method for culturing chondrocytes *in vitro*, the improvement comprising culturing the chondrocytes in the presence of a stimulating amount of an NPAR agonist.

Claim 21 (original): The method of Claim 20, further comprising the step of administering a therapeutically effective amount of the cultured chondrocytes to a site in a subject in need of cartilage repair or growth.

Claim 22 (new): The method of Claim 6, wherein the subject is administered a therapeutically effective amount of a physiologically equivalent agonist comprising a *C*-terminal amide.

Claim 23 (new): The method of Claim 6, wherein the subject is administered a physiologically functional equivalent agonist comprising Ala-Gly-Tyr-Lys-Pro-Asp-Glu-Gly-Lys-Arg-Gly-Asp-Ala-Cys-Glu-Gly-Asp-Ser-Gly-Gly-Pro-Phe-Val-$CONH_2$ (SEQ ID NO.:6).

Claim 24 (new): The method of Claim 6, wherein the subject is administered a physiologically functional equivalent agonist consisting of Ala-Gly-Tyr-Lys-Pro-Asp-Glu-Gly-Lys-Arg-Gly-Asp-Ala-Cys-Glu-Gly-Asp-Ser-Gly-Gly-Pro-Phe-Val-$CONH_2$ (SEQ ID NO.:6).

Claim 25 (new): A method of stimulating cartilage growth or repair at a site in a subject in need of such growth or repair, said method comprising the step of administering to the site an agonist of the non-proteolytically activated thrombin receptor, wherein said agonist consists of the sequence Ala-Gly-Try-Lys-Pro-Asp-Glu-Gly-Lys-Arg-Gly-Asp-Ala-Cys-Glu-Gly-Asp-Ser-Gly-Gly-Pro-Phe-Val-$CONH_2$ (SEQ ID NO.:6).

Claim 26 (new): A method of stimulating cartilage growth at an arthritic joint in a subject, said method comprising the step of administering to the site a therapeutically effective amount of an agonist of the non-proteolytically activated thrombin receptor, wherein said agonist consists of the sequence Ala-Gly-Try-Lys-Pro-Asp-

Glu-Gly-Lys-Arg-Gly-Asp-Ala-Cys-Glu-Gly-Asp-Ser-Gly-Gly-Pro-Phe-Val-$CONH_2$ (SEQ ID NO.:6).

Claim 27 (new): A method of stimulating cartilage growth in a subject at a site being treated for cartilage loss, said method comprising the step of administering to the site a therapeutically effective amount of an agonist of the non-proteolytically activated thrombin receptor, wherein said agonist consists of the sequence Ala-Gly-Try-Lys-Pro-Asp-Glu-Gly-Lys-Arg-Gly-Asp-Ala-Cys-Glu-Gly-Asp-Ser-Gly-Gly-Pro-Phe-Val-$CONH_2$ (SEQ ID NO.:6).

Claim 28 (new): A method of stimulating cartilage growth in a subject at a site being treated for cartilage loss due to traumatic injury, said method comprising the step of administering to the site a therapeutically effective amount of an agonist of the non-proteolytically activated thrombin receptor, wherein said agonist consists of the sequence Ala-Gly-Try-Lys-Pro-Asp-Glu-Gly-Lys-Arg-Gly-Asp-Ala-Cys-Glu-Gly-Asp-Ser-Gly-Gly-Pro-Phe-Val-$CONH_2$ (SEQ ID NO.:6).